

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 ACDA-12 ICAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
/078 W

-----090497 231803Z /72

P 231706Z MAY 78
FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2861
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0277

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM NATO MBFR
SUBJ: MBFR: NATO SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE/UK PROPOSAL ON MBFR

REF: 1. USNATO 5056
2. STATE 126717

1. IT IS NOT CERTAIN AT THIS POINT WHETHER THERE WILL BE A
CONSENSUS IN THE NATO COUNCIL TO PROCEED WITH THE UK SUGGESTION
TO INCLUDE A PROPOSAL FOR A FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
ON MBFR IN THE SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE. IF THE PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED,
WE CONSIDER THAT THE LANGUAGE IN THE UK DRAFT DESCRIBING THE
CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE PROPOSED FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
COULD BE HELD IS TOO WEAK. WE STRONGLY PREFER THE FRG
REDRAFT, AND IN PARTICULAR, ITS CONCLUDING PHRASE: "...AS SOON
AS THIS IS JUSTIFIED BY PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING
THE CLARIFICATION OF THE DATA QUESTION."

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2. LATTER PHRASE MAKES THE MEETING CONDITIONAL UPON
GENUINE PROGRESS IN THE TALKS RATHER THAN A RESPONSE, AND THUS
ACCORDS WITH FOURTH TIC OF WASHINGTON'S GUIDANCE. AT THE SAME
TIME, THE PHRASE DOES NOT SET COMPLETE AGREEMENT ON MANPOWER
DATA AS A PRECONDITION, AND THUS APPEARS TO SQUARE WITH
PENULTIMATE TIC OF WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS.

3. HOWEVER, IF THIS LANGUAGE CAUSES DIFFICULTY FOR THE UK, THE US MAY WISH TO PROPOSE AS A COMPROMISE DELETING "INCLUDING THE CLARIFICATION OF THE DATA QUESTION," AND REPLACING IT BY: " INCLUDING DEFINITE PROGRESS TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF THE DATA ISSUE."

4. IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE HOLDING A FOREIGN MINISTERS' SESSION CONTINGENT ON PRIOR PROGRESS IN THE TALKS INCLUDING ON DATA RATHER THAN ON AN EASTERN RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN INITIATIVE. THE PRESENT UK LANGUAGE IMPLIES A DEGREE OF AUTOMATICITY IN CONVENING A FOREIGN MINISTERS SESSION AFTER RECEIVING AN INITIAL OFFICIAL EASTERN RESPONSE IF THAT RESPONSE IS CONSIDERED ADEQUATE IN ITSELF. THIS FORMULATION OVERLOOKS THE PROBABILITY THAT NATO WILL NOT KNOW FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD UNTIL AFTER FURTHER EXPLORATION WHAT THE ACTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EASTERN RESPONSE IS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE INITIAL EASTERN RESPONSE MAY CONTAIN POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT BY THE WEST WHICH WILL ONLY BECOME EVIDENT WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME. IN ANY CASE, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE EAST WILL MAKE ANY CONCESSION WHICH ITS RESPONSE MAY CONTAIN SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS WHICH WILL NOT BE IMMEDIATELY OR READILY ACCEPTABLE TO THE ALLIES.

3. MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT IS IMPROBABLE THAT THE EASTERN RESPONSE WILL CONTAIN ANY TREATMENT OF DATA OR INDICATION OF PROGRESS ON THE DATA ISSUE, WHICH REMAINS THE CENTRAL PROBLEM
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OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT, IF THE EAST IS PREPARED TO MAKE ANY MOVEMENT ON DATA, IT WILL DO SO ONLY GRADUALLY AND SEPARATELY FROM ITS RESPONSE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE WESTERN INITIATIVE.

4. IT SEEMS TO US ESSENTIAL, IF THE UK PROPOSAL IS TO BE ADVANCED TO THE EAST, TO HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING BOTH WITHIN THE ALLIANCE AND ON AN EAST/WEST BASIS THAT THERE MUST BE ACTUAL PROGRESS TOWARDS AN AGREEMENT, INCLUDING DEFINITE PROGRESS TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF THE DATA ISSUE, BEFORE A FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING WOULD BE HELD. AN AMBIGUOUSLY WORDED WESTERN PROPOSAL FOR A FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING COULD CONVEY A SENSE OF WESTERN URGENCY TO MOVE TOWARD AN AGREEMENT WITH AN ATTENDANT IMPLICATION THAT THE WEST WAS WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON SOME OF ITS FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES. IT COULD ALSO CAUSE THE SOVIETS TO WITHHOLD PART OF THEIR RESPONSE FOR USE AT A MINISTERIAL SESSION. THERE IS AT PRESENT NO SINGLE TOPIC OR ISSUE IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH CAN BE DEVELOPED FOR RATIFICATION BY FOREIGN MINISTERS IN A TWO-DAY SESSION OR WHICH COULD BE DEVELOPED SO THAT IT COULD BE RESOLVED IN A SESSION OF SUCH DURATION. UNLESS IT IS HELD AFTER THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED CONSIDERABLY

FARTHER THAN THEY NOW ARE, A FOREIGN MINISTERS SESSION
PROBABLY WOULD BE LITTLE MORE THAN AN UNPRODUCTIVE AND
PROPAGANDISTIC EXERCISE.RESOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, COMMUNIQUE, SUMMIT MEETINGS, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MBFRV00277
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780216-1246
Format: TEL
From: MBFR VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780529/aaaaaymm.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3d934698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 USNATO 5056
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2604165
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: NATO SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE/UK PROPOSAL ON MBFR
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d934698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014